AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE SHELBYVILLE WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION TWO-MILE WATER LINE PROJECT IN SHELBY COUNTY TEXAS

Antiquities Permit 4898

By

William E. Moore

Brazos Valley Research Associates

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE SHELBYVILLE WATER SUPPLY CORPORATION TWO-MILE WATER LINE PROJECT IN SHELBY COUNTY, TEXAS

BVRA Project 07-27

Principal Investigator

William E. Moore, RPA

Prepared for

Shelbyville Water Supply Corporation
Post Office Box 297
Shelbyville, Texas 75973

Prepared by
Brazos Valley Research Associates
813 Beck Street
Bryan, Texas 77803

ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey of a proposed 1.72-mile water line in south-central Shelby County, Texas was performed on April 27, 2008 by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) for the Shelbyville Water Supply Corporation (WSC) under Antiquities Permit 4898. In all, the area comprises 3.13 acres. One high probability area adjacent to Beauchamp Creek was investigated by shovel testing. Four shovel tests dug through sandy soil to depths of 80 cm were negative in terms of producing cultural materials, and no artifacts were collected. Therefore, it is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned. Copies of the report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), Archeology Division; Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL); and BVRA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am appreciative of the assistance provided by others during this project. Hollie H. Nowlin at J. F. Fontaine & Associates, Inc. was the Project Engineer and provided project area maps. Vince DiVerdi of the Shelbyville WSC signed the permit application as the representative of the sponsor and visited the project area with me. I am grateful to Tanner Singleton for assisting with the shovel testing and mapping. Jean Hughes checked the site records at TARL for previously recorded sites in the project area and vicinity. The figures that appear in this report were prepared by Lili G. Lyddon.

CONTENTS

Figures

INTRODUCTION

The Shelbyville WSC plans to install 1.72 miles of three inch water line along County Road 2420 (4400 feet) and Farm-to-Market Road 2694 (4700 feet) in rural Shelby County, Texas (Figure 1). This project is being funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Services with John Powell the agency representative. The water line will be placed in a trench with three feet of cover and seven inches wide. It will be within the existing highway right-of-way as close to the private property line as possible. A pre-survey assessment identified one area as a likely setting for a prehistoric site. This area is on the south side of Farm-to-Market Road 2694 and the west bank of Beauchamp Creek. There is a small level area above the ditch and adjacent to the fence on private property (Figure 2). The project area is depicted on the USGS topographic map Shelbyville (3194-441) (Figure 3).

Shelby County is located in a part of Texas that contains numerous prehistoric and historic sites, many of which have been considered to possess significant research potential. This county is in the area once inhabited by the prehistoric Caddo Indians of Northeast Texas. Many of these sites contain burials and pottery vessels of exceptional quality. Vandalism of archaeological sites in this area is a serious problem, and the number of intact Caddoan sites is rapidly decreasing. In fact, one Caddoan site (41SY46) with two mounds is located nearby. Since house mounds were often associated with mound sites, it was recommended b the THC that a cultural resources survey be performed by a professional archaeologist prior to the installation of the water line in all high probability areas. In order to comply with this request, the Shelbyville WSC retained BVRA of Bryan, Texas to conduct this investigation.

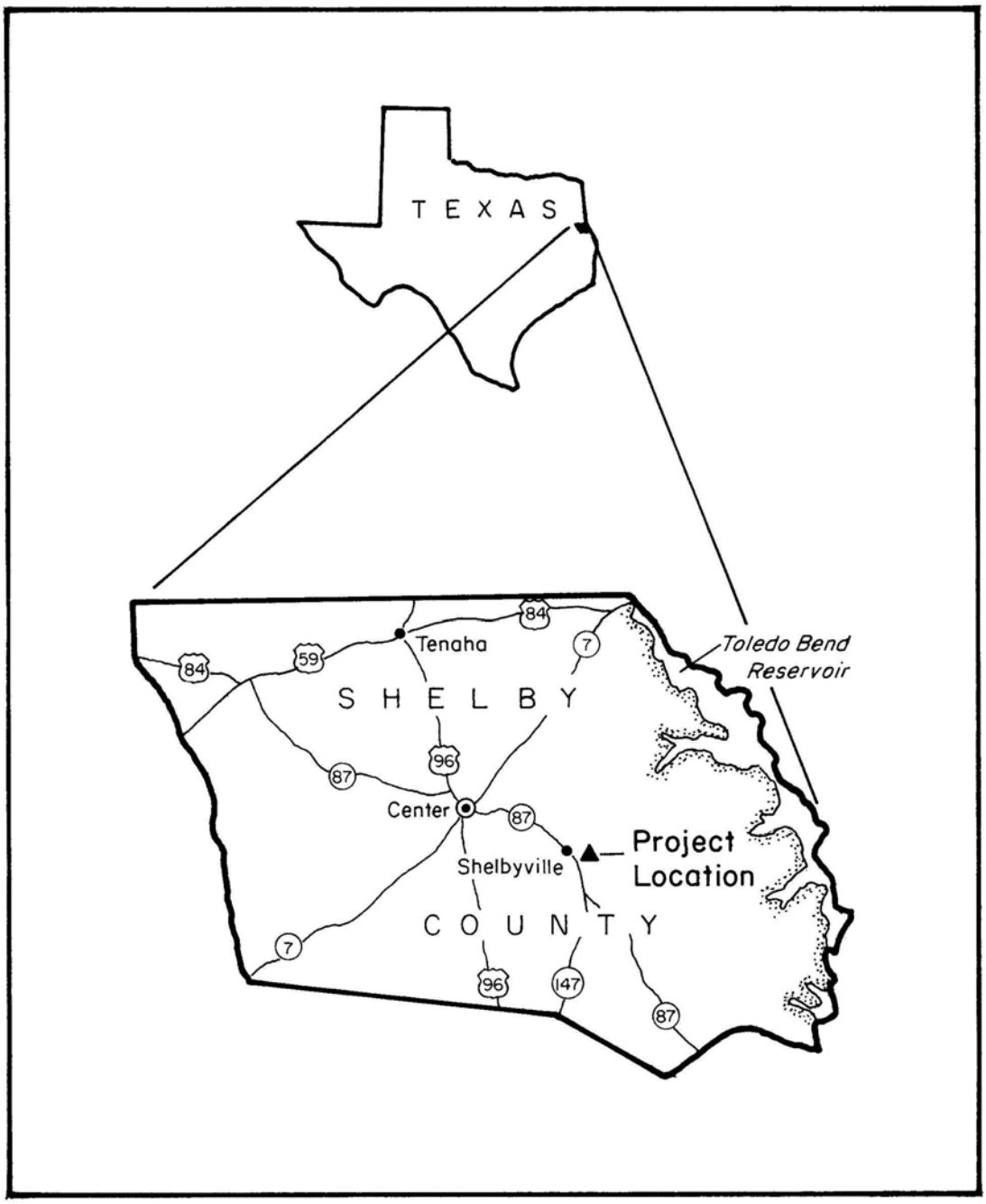

Figure 1. General Location

Figure 2. High Probability Area

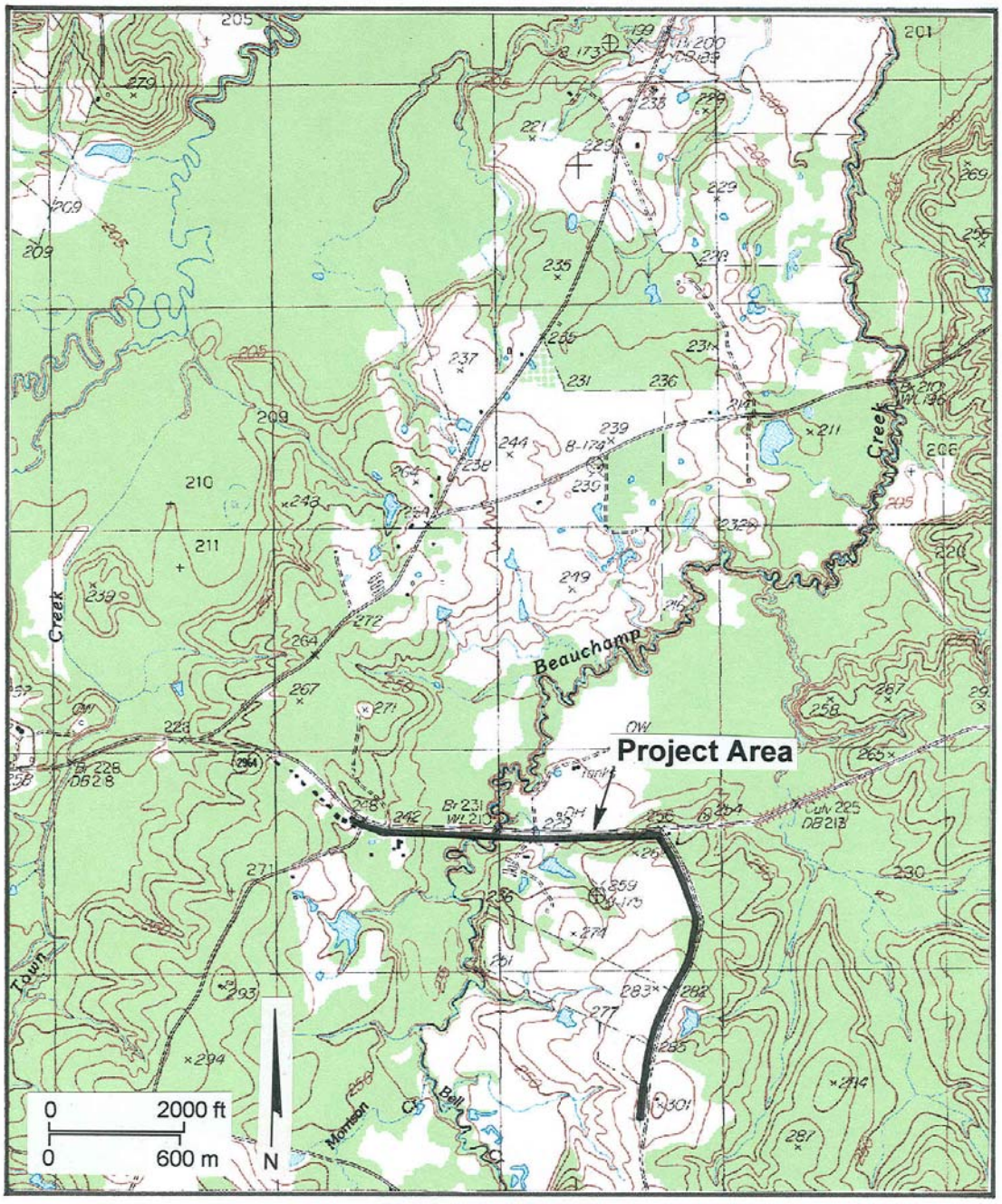

Figure 3. Project Area on Topographic Map Shelbyville

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located within the West Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic province as defined by Fenneman (1946) and the Austropriarian biotic province as defined by Blair (1950:98-100). The reader is referred to Volume I (Stratigraphy) of the Geology of Texas by Sellards et al. (1932) for a more in-depth discussion of the geology of this area. Data taken from the *Texas Almanac* for 1984-1985 (Kingston and Harris 1983) state that the county receives 49.94 inches of annual rainfall. When combined with a January minimum temperature of 38 degrees Fahrenheit and a July maximum temperature of 94 degrees Fahrenheit, a growing season of 240 days results. Fauna known to be present within the project area at various times of the year include fox and gray squirrel, armadillo, raccoon, opossum, cottontail rabbits, white-tailed deer, coyote, beaver, and feral hogs. Many birds utilize the site including dove, meadowlark, killdeers, various sparrows, great blue herons, bluebirds, mockingbirds, and cardinals. According to soil data for Shelby County obtained from the Internet, the project area is located within described as Laneville loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes, frequently flooded. The parent material of this soil type is loamy alluvium. This soil floods often and is described as part of the 100-year floodplain according to a recent wetlands study by J. F. Fontaine & Associates, Inc. (report in preparation). In April, the time of this survey, the water saturation level is at 27 inches (69 cm).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Shbley County is located in the Northeast Texas Cultural-Geographical Region of Texas as defined by Biesaart et al. (1985) in a planning document published by the Texas Historical Commission. Shelby County (with 37 recorded sites in 1985) was 22nd in the region that consists of 30 counties. Of the 37 recorded sites in 1985, 0 are Paleo-Indian, 2 are Late Archaic, 1 is General Archaic, and 35 are Late Prehistoric. Disturbance to sites in the county is listed by Biesaart et al. (1985:184) as erosion (n=36), construction (n=6), disturbed and artificially capped (n=11), deflated (n=2), dispersed (n=22), and vandalized (n=17). Investigation at sites in the county in 1985 consisted of excavated (n=1), tested by hand (n=6), tested by machine (n=1), and surface collected (n=29). One site was documented as containing human remains, and three sites were reported to have earthen works. The planning document does not provide site numbers that can be associated with the above statements. Northeast Texas Archeological Study Region of the Eastern Planning Region as defined by the Department of Antiquities Protection in *Archeology in the Eastern Planning Region, Texas: A Planning Document* (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993). According to the planning document, there were 68 sites recorded in the county as of 1991 (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Table 2.1.1). In the region, Shelby County was 25th of 31 counties in terms of numbers of sites recorded with less than .037 sites per kilometer. Of the 68 recorded sites, 3 were considered not significant, 32 were of unknown significance, 29 were probably significant, and 4 were significant. At the time of this survey there were over 227 recorded prehistoric and historic sites in the county, and the only sites listed in the in the National Register of Historic Places are the Shelby County Courthouse and courthouse square. Three sites have been documented as a State Archeological Landmark. These are the Shelby County Courthouse, Shelby County Jail, and records building.

In 1990, William A. Martin of the Texas Historical Commission compiled a bibliography for the Northeastern Region of Texas (Martin 1990). Martin cites no references for Shelby County, an indication of the sparse amount of work by professional archaeologists. The majority of work by professional archaeologists in the county has been associated with Toledo Bend Reservoir on the Texas-Louisiana border and within the Sabine National Forest. The nearest surveys to the current project area was associated with the recording and assessment of site 41SY46 in the Sabine National Forest. This site was first recorded during a survey for a well pad by Prewitt & Associates, Inc. in 1983 (Fields 1983a). At the time, the site was considered to be significant, so the well pad was relocated. A second visit to the area found the site to be extensive. This study recovered six Caddoan sherds through shovel tests and seven Caddoan sherds in a disturbed area. One sherd was found in a shovel test on one mound, and a second mound was observed. It was recommended that the project plans be revised so that the site and surrounding area will be avoided (Fields 1983b).

Later that same year, the second proposed alternative location for the well pad was examined (Prikryl 1983). No evidence of the site was found within the new footprint, and it was recommended that construction proceed as planned. In October of 1984, archaeologists from Prewitt & Associates, Inc. visited the site of the proposed Simpson Federal Number 2 well pad and access road in the vicinity of the well pad assessed the previous year (Fields 1984). No evidence of a site was found in the project area. Because the eastern edge of site 41SY46 is situated relatively close to the proposed well pad and road, it was recommended that construction personnel be alerted to watch for buried cultural materials.

In September of 1983, Forest Service archaeologist John Ippolito (notes on file at the United States Forest Service office in Lufkin) visited site 41SY46 to verify the site and collected data upon which to base a recommendation. At the time, the site was heavily overgrown and the area had been cut in 1978 and planted in pines in 1980. Ippolitto shovel tested the site to see if the mound was natural or artificially constructed. He recovered several core fragments and primary flakes as well as possible clay balls and concluded that the site should be protected.

In 1989, Timothy K. Perttula included a discussion of site 41SY46 in his manuscript entitled *A Study of Mound Sites in the Sabine River Basin, Northeast Texas and Northwest Louisiana* (Perttula 1989). He recovered Caddoan sherds from additional shovel testing and concluded that one of the mounds may have been used as a platform for a house that had been burned.

Overviews of the area include works by (Lynott and Richner 1977), Woodall (1972), and Story, et al. (1990). Prehistoric occupations in the region cover all time periods from Paleoindian through Historic Caddoan, circa 9500 B.C. - A.D. 1860 (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:44). The reader is referred to this comprehensive and well-organized document for additional information regarding the archaeological background for Shelby County and vicinity.

METHODS

Prior to entering the field the Archeological Site Atlas was checked for previously recorded sites and past surveys in the area. Three important reports were reviewed during the planning stages of this project. These are a planning document by the Texas Historical Commission (Biesaart et al. 1985), a planning document by the Department of Antiquities Protection (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993), and an archeological bibliography for the Northeastern Region of Texas (Martin 1990). The interested reader is referred to these sources for additional information regarding the prehistory of this area.

Prior to the field survey, a pre-survey assessment was conducted by the Principal Investigator. The entire route of the water line was driven, and it was concluded that the only area worthy of shovel testing was on the west bank of Beauchamp Creek. The Research Design stated that four shovel tests in this area would be sufficient unless a site was found.

The field investigation was conducted on April 27, 2008. The project area consisted of an upland area overlooking Beauchamp Creek to the east. The grass cover made it impossible to view the ground surface; therefore, the area was investigated solely through shovel testing. The field crew consisted of the Principal Investigator and Tanner Singleton. Since the water line will be placed near a fence that separates public land from private property, the shovel tests were dug in close proximity to this fence and above the adjacent ditch. Four tests were dug from west to east in the direction of the creek with an interval of 10 meters between each test. The soil from was screened using ¼ inch hardware cloth, and the distance between each test was measured using a 50-meter tape. The tests were terminated at 80 cm because the sandy soil was changing to clay and was very wet. Shovel test data was recorded on a log, which appears as Appendix I to this report. The location of each test was plotted on a field map (Figure 4). Figure 5 illustrates Shovel Test 4. This project was also documented through field notes and a digital camera.

The east bank of Beauchamp Creek was visited during the pre-survey assessment and found to be disturbed in some places and low and marsh in other areas. Therefore, it was not considered to be a high probability area, and it was not subjected to shovel testing.

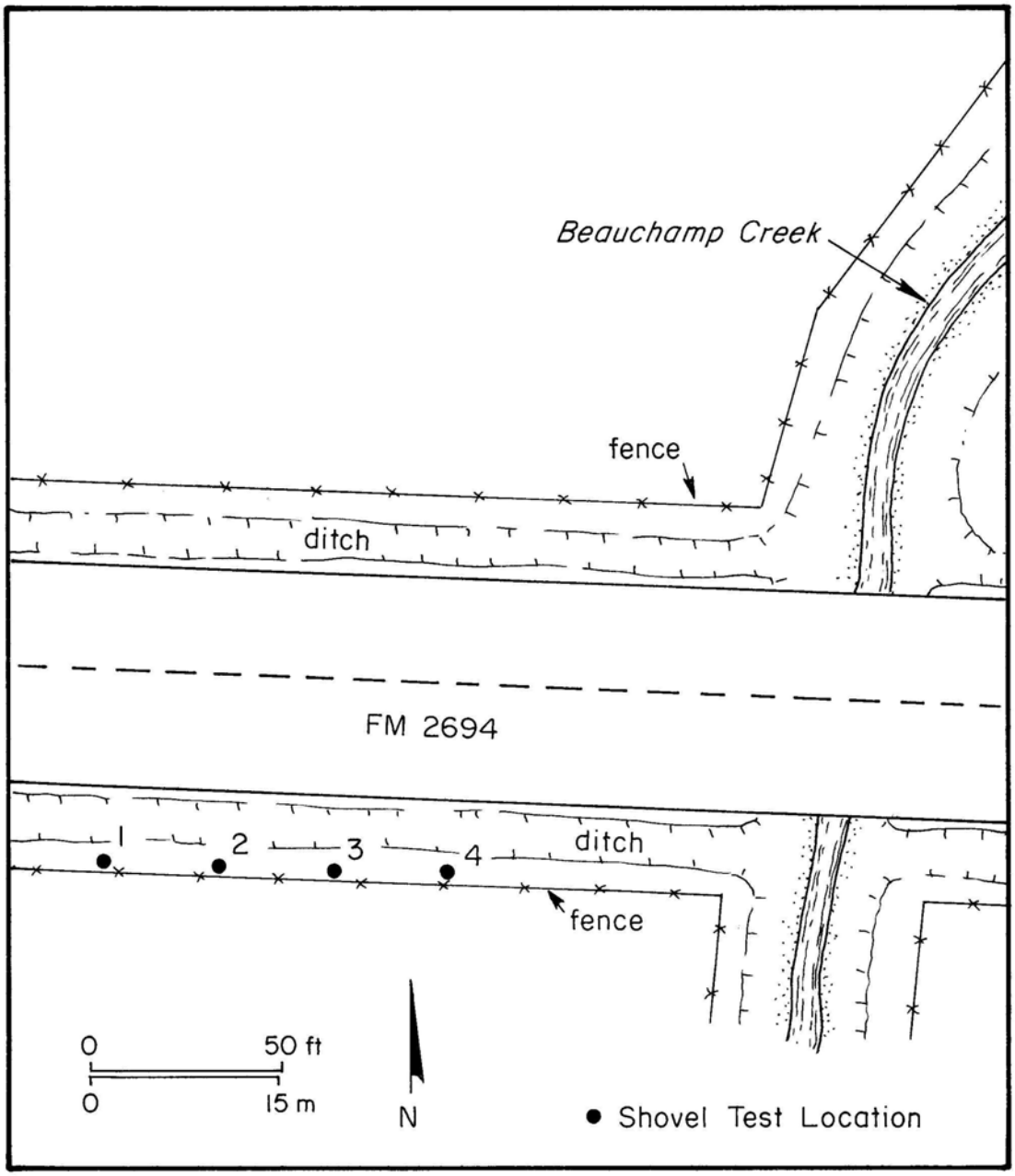

Figure 4. Location of Shovel Tests

Figure 5. Shovel Test 4

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The records check at TARL revealed that no professional investigations have been conducted in the project area, and no archaeological sites are known to exist. One significant Caddoan mound site (41SY46) is located in the Sabine National Forest to the north and east of the single high probability area. Investigations by other archaeologists found no evidence of this site to the south and west in the vicinity of the high probability area on Beauchamp Creek. Four shovel tests in the high probability area were dug through sandy soil. The tests were terminated at 80 cm when the soil was mixed with clay and water was present from the perched water table. No artifacts were found in any of the four tests, and there is no evidence that an archaeological site is present in this area. Due to the frequently flooded nature of the soils, it is not likely that a permanent camp would be located in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No archaeological sites were found during the shovel testing of the single high probability area along the two-mile water line as currently proposed. It is, therefore, recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned by the Shelbyville WSC without further consultation with the THC. Should the construction plans change to include additional water line in an area that can be viewed as a likely setting for a prehistoric site, the THC must be notified in case additional survey by a professional archaeologist is warranted. Also, if cultural materials are unearthed during construction, all work in the area of the find must stop until the THC can evaluate the situation. This study conformed to the Minimum Survey Standards as defined by the Archaeology Division of the THC.

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APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG*

Shovel Test	Depth	Comments
1	80 cm	dug through sandy loam until soil became mixed with clay and was wet due to a perched water table
2	80 cm	dug through sandy loam until soil became mixed with clay and was wet due to a perched water table
3	80 cm	dug through sandy loam until soil became mixed with clay and was wet due to a perched water table
4	80 cm	dug through sandy loam until soil became mixed with clay and was wet due to a perched water table

* all tests were negative